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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 SMS-01 SAA-01 /088 W
----------002581 150655Z /15
R 130945Z AUG 78
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6726
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, IZ, UR, KS, PK
SUBJECT: IRAQI VICE PRESIDENT VISITS PAKISTAN, NORTH KOREA AND SOVIET UNION

1. IRAQI VICE PRESIDENT TAHA MUHIUDDIN MAAROUF VISITED NORTH KOREA SEPTEMBER 8-11 AS HEAD OF IRAQI DELEGATION TO CELEBRATIONS MARKING 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF DPRK. THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY SURPRISE TRIP TO MOSCOW ON SEPT 11.

2. MAAROUF'S VISIT TO PYONGYANG COMES AFTER SERIES OF HIGH LEVEL NORTH KOREAN TRIPS TO BAGHDAD AND APPEARS TO BE MINIMAL GESTURE OF RECIPROCITY TOWARD GOVERNMENT OF A COUNTRY WITH WHICH IRAQ HAS RELATIONS MARKED MORE BY REVOLUTIONARY RHETORIC THAN BY SUBSTANTIVE INTERESTS.

3. MAAROUF IS TOP KURDISH OFFICIAL IN IRAQI REGIME. HE IS NOT A BAATH PARTY MEMBER NOR DOES HE BELONG TO CENTRAL LEADERSHIP GROUP. HIS DELEGATION INCLUDED BOTH IRAQI
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GOVERNMENT AND BAATH PARTY MEMBERS, MOST NOTABLY BURHANUDDIN ABDUL RAHMAN, A FAIRLY JUNION MEMBER OF IRAQI RCC AND BAATH PARTY REGIONAL COMMAND. JUDGING BY IRAQI MEDIA REPORTS, NORTH KOREAN LEADERS DID NOT ACCORD MAAROUF BETTER TREATMENT THAN HIS RANK AND STATUS CALL FOR. WE HAVE SEEN NO INDICATION THAT HE MET WITH KIM II-SONG.

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4. ON WAY TO NORTH KOREA, KRAQI DELEGATION STOPPED OVERNIGHT IN ISLAMABAD, MEETING WITH PAKISTAN PRESIDENT CHAUDHARY AND GENERAL ZIA UL-HAQ. BRIEF AIRPORT STOP IN PEKING WAS GRACED BY UNIDENTIFIED VICE CHAIRMAN OF NATIONAL PEOPLES CONGRESS.

5. TO SURPRISE OF USUAL SOURCES HERE, MAAROUF ARRIVED IN MOSCOW SEPEMBER 11 AND MET WITH PRIME MINISTER KOSYGIN FOLLOWING DAY. LOCAL PRESS STATES THAT MEETING WAS HELD IN A CORDIAL ATMOSPHERE AND COVERED BOTH BILATERAL RELATIONS AND THE SITUATION IN THE ARAB AREA.

6. COMMENT: ONLY PORTION OF MAAROUF'S ITINERARY WHICH WAS ANNOUNCED IN ADVANCE WAS VISIT TO PYONGYANG. IT MAY BE THAT IRAQI REGIME, WHILE FEELING OBLIGATED TO REPAY COURTESY OF PAST VISITS TO BAGHDAD BY NORTH KOREANS, WAS NERVOUS ABOUT FURTHER IRRITATING SOVIET UNION IN WAKE OF SERIOUS TENSIONS WHICH ERUPTED SEVERAL MONTHS AGO. MAAROUF, A PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMAT, WAS AN IDEAL CHOICE TO ATTEMPT SUCH A DELICATE BALANCING ACT.
MACK

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